



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 12, 2002

PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
(202)289-6400

ASMFC & MAFMC Set 2003 Black Sea Bass & Bluefish TALs

Philadelphia, PA – Last week, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council approved the establishment of total allowable landings (TAL) limits for the 2003 black sea bass and bluefish fisheries at 6.8 million pounds and 37.3 million pounds, respectively. The TAL for black sea bass remains unchanged from that of 2002, while the TAL for bluefish represents a 39 percent increase relative to 2002.

“These TALs indicate improvements in the stock status of both species and the same, if not increased, fishing opportunities,” stated Robert E. Beal, Director, Interstate Fisheries Management Program. “Under the Black Sea Bass Plan the Board was required to reduce fishing exploitation by 32 percent for 2003. However, positive trends in the survey index have allowed us to maintain the 2002 quota level, while ensuring continued rebuilding of the stock.”

This past May, the Commission and Council, through the adoption of Amendment 13 to the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan, established a state-by-state allocation of the commercial black sea bass quota for the 2003 and 2004 fishing years. Both the Commission and the Council believe that a management program, which allows for state-specific regulations offers the most regulatory flexibility for each gear type used throughout the range of the species. The approved state allocations of the commercial quota are: Maine and New Hampshire - 0.5% each, Connecticut - 1%, Delaware - 5%, New York - 7%, Rhode Island, North Carolina and Maryland - 11% each, Massachusetts - 13%, and New Jersey and Virginia - 20% each. Overall, the commercial fishery receives 49 percent of the TAL. The Commission and Council will meet in December to establish the 2003 recreational management measures.

Bluefish are currently managed through a commercial state-by-state quota system and a recreational possession limit, which are set annually. The Board and Council established a coastwide TAL of 37,293,397 pounds and a recreational possession limit of 15 fish for 2003. The approved TAL represents a 39 percent increase, while the possession limit remains the same relative to 2002.

Both black sea bass and bluefish are managed jointly by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. The Board and Council meet annually to establish commercial and recreational fisheries management regulations for the upcoming fishing season. For more information, please contact Michael Lewis, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400.

NOTE TO PRESS: If you would like to receive the Commission's press releases via email, please contact Tina Berger, Public Affairs & Resource Specialist, at tberger@asmfc.org or fax to (202) 289-6051. PR02-25

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species.

1444 Eye Street, N.W. -- Sixth Floor -- Washington, D.C. 20005
(202)289-6400 (phone) (202)289-6051 (fax)
www.asmfc.org